

it. The product was the Merovingian and Carlovingian history. Passion, sensuality, ferocity, superstitious ignorance, and fear characterized the age. It is supposed that western Europe was overpopulated and that the crusades operated a beneficial reduction of numbers.¹ These facts may account for the gigantic mass phenomena in the early Middle Ages. Every sentiment was extravagant. Men were under some mighty gregarious instinct which drove them to act in masses, and they passed from one great passion or enthusiastic impulse to another at very short intervals. The passions of hatred and revenge were manifested, upon occasion, to the extremity of fiendishness. Nothing which the mind could conceive of seemed to be renounced as excessive (Clement V, John XXII). Gregory IX pursued the heretics and the emperor with an absorption of his whole being and a rancor which we cannot understand. Poverty was elevated into a noble virtue and a transcendent merit.² This was the height of ascetic absurdity, since poverty is only want, and the next step would be a cult of suicide. The mendicant orders fought each other malignantly. Every difference of opinion made a war of extermination. Civil contests were carried on with extravagant ferocity as to the means used and as to the exultation of success or the penalty of failure. What was lacking was discipline. There was no authority or doctrine which could set limits to private passion. Life was held cheap. The gallows and the pit were in use all the time. The most marked product of invention was instruments of torture. Men and women were burned to death for frivolous reasons. Punishments taught people to gloat over suffering. Torture was inflicted as idly as we take testimony. With all this

went deep
 faith in the efficacy of ritual and great other-
 worldliness, that is,
 immediate apprehension of the other world in this
 one. All the
 mores were adjusted to these features of faith and
 practice. It all
 proceeded out of the masses of the people. The
 church was borne
 along like a chip on the tide. The church hung back
 from the
 crusades until the depth of the popular interest
 had been tested.
 Then the crusades were declared to be the " will
 of God." This

¹ Kugler, *Kreuzzuge*, 7.

² Michael, *Gesch. d. Deutschen Volkes*, II, 80.